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Canada's tourism business magazine



## What works for the customer, works for the industry The new CTC web strategy

**Michele McKenzie** is president and CEO of the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) and has been leading the federal tourism marketing organization through some fundamental changes to how it does business in global tourism markets, including the development of a new Canada Brand, a reconsideration of how the CTC works with small and medium-sized enterprises, and the development and articulation of a new web strategy. TOURISM spoke with McKenzie in mid-August:

**TOURISM:** Let's talk about the new CTC web strategy.

**McKenzie:** The fundamental change to our strategy is that our marketing execution will be shifting from about 15% web-based activities to almost 50%. Of course, this will require significant operational changes in our CTC offices to support this initiative.

One aspect of the new strategy which will have a big impact for the industry at large is that we will run TravelCanada.ca off a single platform globally. This is a huge change. In the past, our web presence internationally has been structured as individual websites in individual countries. For example, the TravelCanada site in the United Kingdom has been hosted in the UK and operated from there – as it is the case in Japan and in our other international markets.

This has been an expensive way to support a web presence. Technically, the biggest change coming is that about 70% of the content will be global, with the remaining 30% customized for individual markets, within the global content. This way we can serve the brand positioning globally – tailored for each market of course.

In the past, for an advertising program like ComeSkiCanada in the UK for example, using a microsite through which customers could access specialized product information, unless a Canadian tourism

business was active in the UK market and in that campaign, it was not able to benefit from the campaign because the consumer had to work too hard to get to that product's information.

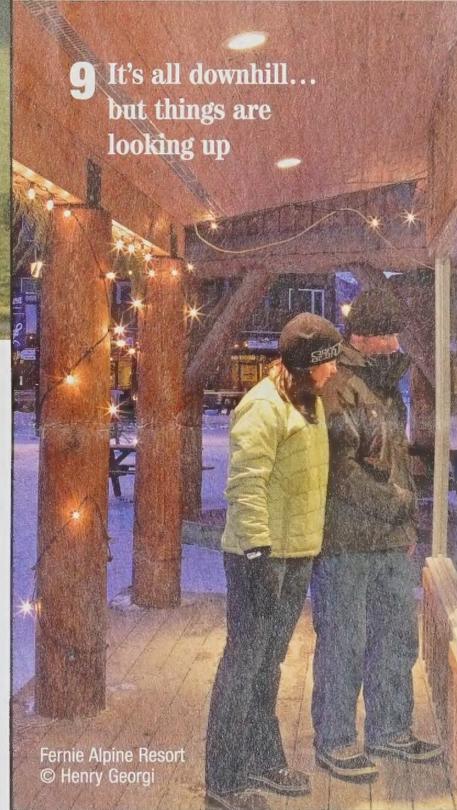
**TOURISM:** The use of microsites has been useful for advertising campaign measurement; will we continue to use them?

**McKenzie:** In the future, we are going to reduce the use of microsites dramatically. Soon, when consumers come to the TravelCanada website, they will have the back end of the entire product database to search. Let me elaborate: suppose you come in through a ski advertisement, but would really like to find out about dogsledding because you are intrigued by the whole idea of a "winter experience", you will be able to get that information quite easily. Right now, you really can't get this type of more global information from a microsite.

Microsites have been used extensively to measure campaign effectiveness, a sort of "middle technology" approach that is akin to coupon response tracking.

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9 It's all downhill... but things are looking up



Fernie Alpine Resort  
© Henry Georgi

## SMEs understand the e-commerce advantage

The Canadian Tourism Commission's (CTC) new web strategy should have a profound impact on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across Canada, and the organization's CEO is understandably enthusiastic. "I think our increased focus on the web is going to be really effective in giving a new marketing channel to SMEs," says Michele McKenzie.

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## Going green A bottom-line imperative

**Editorial**  
PETER KINGSMILL



The Hotel Association of Canada, along with its members, is to be highly commended for its determination to address energy conservation in a meaningful way (*TOURISM* Daily, August 23, 2005). The new Canada Goes Green and Green Keys initiatives are leading an operational shift light-years removed from the green tourism and ecotourism movements that focused mostly on nature tourism products – cute critters for the conservation-conscious canoeing enthusiast.

It was inevitable, as the world economy rushed recklessly along a path of increased consumption of every type of natural resource, we would come up abruptly against the downside: depleted non-renewable energy supplies, wasted natural areas and decreased biodiversity. Now we are hitting the wall, brought home to us first, perhaps, by the politics of petroleum which are now providing us with a very uncomfortable foretaste of the new reality: we must, we absolutely must, reduce our non-renewable energy consumption – and our expectations – if we are to survive on this very finite planet, let alone thrive in the travel and tourism industry.

In this magazine, we have tracked some interesting “green” initiatives over the years. Ann Layton’s work with Fairmont Hotels and Resorts (a corporation firmly on-side with Canada Goes Green), the development of the ecotourism sector, and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada’s accord with Parks Canada to name but a few. It is fascinating – and very encouraging – to finally see “the big guns” accept and champion the fact that “going green” and using green technologies are viable alternatives to a headlong rush to the bottom of the (oil) barrel.

From this “longer than yesterday’s headlines” perspective, it needs to be said that the contributions of a great many forward-thinking people – some of whom were involved with tourism – have made it possible for “the big guns” to be able to move on this issue. Were it not for the elementary school teachers who brought environmental issues into the classrooms of those who are now in mainstream society, company managers, accountants and shareholders would be operating in a less receptive business climate. If it were not for the tourism operators whose whole reason for being in this business was – and still is – their love of land and nature, we would likely not have as educated and aware a tourism business sector.

The four “Rs” (re-use, recycle, recover, and reduce) all have their bottom line in energy conservation, so therefore energy conservation has always been a bottom-line imperative. Congratulations to the accommodation sector for picking up the ball, dusting off the cobwebs, and putting it back into play! **T**

# TOURISM

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### ON THE COVER:

The International Balloon Festival of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu was launched in 1984 by local tourism and economic development groups, with the hopes of increasing the summer tourist visitation. The festival has literally ballooned to become the largest of its kind in Canada, attracting 360,000 visitors, 125 balloons and countless tourist dollars to the region.

Photo© The International Balloon Festival of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu

Photographers: Stéphanie Lachance (cover) and Rémy Boily (above).

## To the Editor

### Publisher's Note

Letters may be edited for length and content. For complete texts visit *TOURISM* Online at [www.canadatourism.com](http://www.canadatourism.com).

### Rubber tire traffic down in southern Ontario

We appreciate the magazine’s regular updates from an industry perspective on how the tourism industry is doing across the country. For our part this summer, we are definitely finding that Canadian tourist visits are up, but numbers are down considerably for rubber tire traffic from the US. The weather has been great, though, for those of us in the boat tour business!

John Chomniak,  
Lock Tours Canada,  
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

### Events: a growing tourism opportunity

What do you do when you are devoid of mountains to attract foreign tourists, if you don’t have the massive capital at your disposal to construct the next Disneyland or if you are without a coastline that would attract hordes of holiday-ers? The answer is to produce events. And on that front, there is good news and it’s this: any community can!

By dreaming up, creating and staging events even the smallest of communities can tap into the new age of tourism activity. Given demographic trends such as the graying of the population, the demand for tourism products that are somewhat interactive and yet can be enjoyed at one’s own pace are the order of the day. The market today is one where purchasers desire to participate in something, to be a part of a process, to enjoy some degree of interactivity. Events fill the bill and the evidence is everywhere.

In Saskatchewan, massive crowds at the Craven Jamboree, the growing number of participants at the Taste of Saskatchewan in downtown Saskatoon and the rapidly growing attendance at Moose Jaw’s relatively new Festival of Words are but a few examples. One can add to that list all the reunions held in one small community after another during provincial centennial celebrations.

This focus on events illustrates an implicit understanding of the changing nature of tourism. Events can be tailored to specific demographic and psychographic groupings. They can be created, altered or folded. Even more importantly, communities of any size can host a wide variety of events either in sequence or simultaneously.

The ocean, on the other hand, is the ocean. The mountains are the mountains. They either attract or they don’t. Events – and therein lies the beauty of them – can be tailored to the market.

More than that (and this is a significant issue for small communities) this particular tourism phenomenon is not reliant on a huge investment in facilities. Rather, events are often volunteer-driven. Volunteerism, being an inherent strength of small towns in particular, means one thing: any community can!

Dwight Percy  
Percy Communications Inc.  
Saskatoon

# TIAC gets a new look

TOURISM reported this summer on a branding initiative being undertaken by the Tourism Association of Canada (TIAC). At the time, the organization was conducting a perceptual audit among key stakeholder groups, and planned to use the results to inform the development of a new visual identity.

When we checked back for an update, TIAC president and CEO Randy Williams shared with *TOURISM* the key findings of that process. "It confirmed that TIAC

is viewed within and beyond the industry as Canada's only tourism voice representing all sectors and regions," he said. "Stakeholders clearly see us as an organization that brings a diverse industry together and gets results on its behalf."

Williams points with pride at the design of TIAC's new logo (reproduced here). A picture may be worth a thousand words, but the association describes its new image in little more than a hundred:



## Brand Canada enters a new phase

These are exciting times for marketers at the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) and their industry partners. The CTC is gearing up to integrate Keep Exploring – the new Brand Canada – into the marketplace as part of the 2006 marketing campaigns, which will be unveiled by Jean B. Chrétien (senior vice-president for brand implementation) at the Tourism Industry Association of Canada conference in Québec city on October 24.

"Canadian tourism will for the first time have a presence in people's hearts and minds that extends beyond the travel pages." Properly implementing a new brand at a national level is an exhaustive process, involving constant dialogue with partners and stakeholders. The CTC market committees are being continually updated with information as plans for implementation are firmed up. "Everyone working on the campaigns needs to be kept in the loop," says Chrétien. "Our in-market programs for 2006 are the most innovative campaigns we have ever developed; Canadian tourism will for the first time have a presence in people's hearts and minds that extends beyond the travel pages."

Chrétien emphasizes that the success of the whole project relies on working together in new ways with industry partners to ensure "we do justice to one of the world's great tourism destinations, and solidify Canada's reputation as a leader in productive tourism marketing." **T**

### New CTC publications

#C50514E 2004/05 US Ski Advertising Tracking and Conversion Study

#C50506E Media Coverage of the Canadian Tourism Sector – First Quarter 2005

To order: [distribution@ctc-cct.ca](mailto:distribution@ctc-cct.ca)

## On the move... CTC update

The move of the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) is going ahead as planned. The new office will be located in the Bentall 4 complex in Vancouver's downtown core and is scheduled to officially open its doors December 1. To facilitate the relocation process, operations at the Ottawa office will cease effective November 28; a satellite office will remain in its place.

During this period, please continue to correspond with the CTC as usual. Mail will be forwarded to the appropriate contact and e-mail addresses will remain active. If you are unsure who would best be able to assist you, please call the reception desk at 613 946-1000 and your call will be redirected appropriately.

Rest assured that communications with the industry will continue to be a priority for the CTC. *TOURISM* Daily news and *TOURISM* Online will remain in full operation as your primary sources for the latest information on all CTC activities. **T**

*TIAC's new logo is a visual expression of its role as the voice of Canadian tourism and an agent of positive change. Bold, upward-reaching and intersecting strokes represent the two pillars of Canada's tourism success: its products and its people. The partial silhouette of a maple leaf reflects the pan-Canadian scope of TIAC's membership and of its actions on the industry's behalf. It is positioned beneath and within the pillars, depicting the organization as a source of strength and support for the industry, and conveying a sense of inclusiveness and responsiveness. Red tones capture the ideas of passion and action, while silver-grey embodies professionalism and a forward-thinking approach.* **T**

## Fuel prices squeezing household income, travel

Just as consumers were adjusting to an August spike in gasoline price levels breaching the \$1 per litre mark, hurricane Katrina hit the US Gulf Coast inflicting significant damage on the region's oil and gas industry. Supply fears sent gas prices skyrocketing to \$1.30 and more per litre in some Canadian cities; the financial squeeze of high gas prices will undoubtedly constrict consumer spending, as well as leisure and business travel demand over the coming months, according to the *Tourism Intelligence Bulletin (TIB)* (September 2005) published by the Canadian Tourism Commission and the Conference Board of Canada.

The Conference Board's latest *Industrial Outlook* for the Canadian tourism industry has forecast strengthening tourism profits through this year and next. However, the TIB points out that the outlook for the Canadian tourism industry becomes less optimistic if gasoline prices remain as high as they are now. Travel price increases (higher gas prices and climbing fuel surcharges) could be substantial, but a potentially greater impact stems from the tightening squeeze on household finances. Recent estimates show fuel costs (as a share of household disposable income) are at their highest levels in 20 years.

- In the US, domestic and overseas travel demand continues to build, although US visits to Canada have not kept up with this growth.
- In Europe, strong economic growth continues to elude that economy as a whole. While many new entrants into the EU are boasting robust growth, the large economies of Germany and France continue to underperform.
- China continues to propel economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region; economic growth for the country is once again expected to surpass 9% in 2005.

The *Tourism Intelligence Bulletin* for September, and the *Short Term Industry Outlook* for the fourth quarter of 2005 are available at [www.canadatourism.com](http://www.canadatourism.com). **T**

## Is the traditional group tour a thing of the past?

### Research Viewpoint

SCOTT MEIS



The group tour is one of the tourism industry's most established and recognizable product categories. For more than 100 tourism operators in Canada, the group tour is their core business. For many destinations and hotels, it has been the mainstay of their business for years.

The group tour was born in a whole different era, when the dominant idea among travellers was that you went touring rather than heading to a destination. It was about the romance of the road or the rails, but now that could be changing. Earlier this summer I had the chance to attend the annual conference of the Travel and Tourism Research Association; one of the surprising presentations I heard is how the group tour may be in decline in Canada and the US.

The data is undeniable. Current trend measurements undertaken in the US suggest the overall market for group tours in North America (outside Mexico) is flat or declining. Among outbound pleasure travellers, the percentage who took a group tour on their most recent trip has declined steadily since the mid-1990s, from 14% in 1995 to 10% in 2003.

As well, there is an image and perceptual problem that has grown up around group tours. Respondents to questions rated it low on the list of "enriching" trip experiences. There is also an awareness of the inconveniences of group tours, such as the "bus prison," packing and unpacking, dissatisfaction with travelling companions, lack of flexibility in scheduling and a lack of independence in general.

It would be fair, perhaps, to comment that tourism is like clothing fashion; what is "in" this year may be "out" a couple of years from now. However, it may be more serious than that for the traditional group tour market. It may be the case that this market has been stagnating or shrinking for the past several years – in the jargon of researchers, "it may be trending lower on a long-term basis".

To some extent we should have known this. Independent travel has developed much faster than conventional group travel over the past several years, and the product development of tourism industries in all western countries reflects this.

This represents an opportunity for researchers. The information we have available on group tours is not current and is not comprehensive, so the research challenge presents itself: is group travel really in decline? What are the trends, both long term and short term? What is the demographic structure of this slice of the market? What are the competing products? What are the factors affecting purchases of tours? What are the negatives – why is it that fewer people seem to be buying this product? What are the positives – how can the group tour experience be redesigned and repackaged to appeal to more people? What market segments are apt to consider the tour? Can the traditional tour morph into new products with different appeal?

Many people have enjoyed group tours over the past decades. It would be useful to know how many people still are enjoying them, or might like to. **7**

### Write to us – it's so EASY!

At *Tourism*, we strive to provide you with information about tourism industry issues you want – and need – to know about. Is there more? Is there something you want to read about? Is there something you would like us to investigate? Write to us – it's so EASY! E-mail: [tourism@ctc-cct.ca](mailto:tourism@ctc-cct.ca), or call 613-954-3919.

### A monthly guide to travel & tourism data

Tourism Activity	Reference Period	Quantity	% Change from previous year
<b>Tourists to Canada</b>			
From the U.S. - Total	January-July 2005	8,314,938	-2.6
By Auto	January-July 2005	5,126,407	-5.1
By Non-auto	January-July 2005	3,188,531	1.7
From Overseas - Total	January-July 2005	2,450,849	9.4
United Kingdom	January-July 2005	510,523	8.4
Japan	January-July 2005	217,326	4.1
France	January-July 2005	186,879	10.7
Germany	January-July 2005	174,461	9.2
China	January-July 2005	60,223	16.2
Australia	January-July 2005	118,971	17.0
Mexico	January-July 2005	116,750	12.2
Korea (South)	January-July 2005	106,217	11.5
<b>Outbound Canadian Tourists</b>			
To the U.S. - Total	January-July 2005	8,729,830	8.9
By Auto	January-July 2005	4,915,141	7.5
By Non-Auto	January-July 2005	3,814,689	10.8
To Overseas - Total	January-July 2005	4,010,575	10.0
<b>Employment in Tourism</b>			
Total Activities	First Quarter, 2005	594,800	1.5
Accommodation	First Quarter, 2005	150,800	1.2
Food and Beverage	First Quarter, 2005	141,900	1.1
Transportation	First Quarter, 2005	81,400	1.7
<b>Selected Economic Indicators</b>			
Personal Disposable Income per person (\$)	First Quarter, 2005	23,692	0.2
GDP at market prices (current, \$ billion)	First Quarter, 2005	1,331.3	1.0
GDP chained (1997, \$ billion)	First Quarter, 2005	1,143.8	0.6
CPI (1992=100)	July 2005	127.3	2.0
<b>Exchange Rates (in Cdn\$)</b>			
American dollar	August 2005	1.2040	-8.2
British pound	August 2005	2.1616	-9.5
Japanese yen	August 2005	0.0109	-8.4
EURO	August 2005	1.4808	-7.5

**Note:** All tourist estimates deal with trips of one or more nights; all data on this table is not seasonally adjusted except for the GDP at market prices and the GDP chained.

**Source:** Statistics Canada and the Bank of Canada

### US market weakens overall performance

Overall international travel to Canada continues to slide, falling 1.5% in July 2005 to 3.2 million trips; year-to-date the total number of trips to Canada from international markets is down 726,000 from the high recorded in 2001. Decreased travel from the US is a major factor in the decline.

Travel from overseas rose 8% over July 2004 to reach 670,000 trips. The largest increase was from South America (25%), followed by North America – other than US – at 7.5%, Europe (7.0%) and Asia (6.8%). Canada's three key European markets recorded favourable results when compared to the July 2004: France (7.6%), Germany (2.4%) and the UK (5.4%). The year-to-date total for 2005 is the second highest in a decade, topping 2.4 million trips from overseas destinations to Canada.

The US continues to be a market of considerable concern to Canadian tourism, as it alone dropped 3.8% in July reaching only 2.5 million trips. Auto travel declined 5.2%, or 89,000 trips, compared to 2004 while non-auto was relatively steady experiencing a decline of only 1%. Year-to-date US travel to Canada is down 2.6% over last year. **7**

**Source:** International Travel Survey, Statistics Canada

# Why purchase online?

The following report was prepared by Claude Pélloquin of the Tourism Intelligence Network of the ESG-UQAM Chair in Tourism (University of Quebec at Montréal).

A 2005 tourism management study sheds light on the purchasing habits of North American Web users with respect to tourism products. The two primary factors motivating them to conclude online transactions are the quality and accuracy of on-site information and a simple reservation process.

## Study context

The main reason consumers have overwhelmingly adopted the Internet is that it enables them to shop 24/7 in the comfort of their home. However, there are a number of factors that differentiate Web user purchasing habits. For instance, those who purchase travel products online are influenced by the complexity of the product. Other important considerations include the ability to compare prices, discounts and a user-friendly interface.

With that in mind, experts have studied the relationship between the purchaser's motivation to buy and the complexity of online travel products. Since Web expertise plays a significant role in this, consumers have been divided into expert users and novice users. The

study aimed to prove that ease of navigation was the primary reason for variations in purchase decisions between online products.

Airline tickets, accommodation and car rentals are considered relatively simple travel products. All-inclusive trips, cruises and tours constitute more complex products.

In an attempt to simplify navigation, many sites have become "content aggregators" that offer one-stop shopping. This strategy has been extremely successful for such agencies as Travelocity and Expedia. Dynamic packaging, whereby Web users create their own package while retaining a certain degree of flexibility, have added a new twist to the tourism landscape.

## Motivating factors for Web users

The study examined the top six factors that motivate consumers to make online purchases (see Tables 1 and 2). The factors are as follows:

- The opportunity to earn points through a customer loyalty program. Some sites have even set up a special page for members to track their reward points (mariottrewards.com, for example).
- The availability of the desired product.

- Clear, detailed information that enables the user to make an informed decision.
- A simple reservation process is a key factor in the online purchase decision. Especially in the case of more complex travel products, customers must be able to find the information they need to make a decision.
- The reputation of the company or site's banner, as this reassures the purchaser and may positively influence the outcome of the transaction.
- Consumers are more sensitive to the price of online products than they are to conventionally purchased products. This is partly due to aggressive advertising campaigns that have gradually led consumers to expect discount products.

The experts used data from a Canadian Tourism Commission study conducted in November 2001 that surveyed 1,161 Canadians and 1,145 Americans. Although Web user behaviour has admittedly changed since then, the study's findings nevertheless constitute a valid basis for comparing and understanding travellers' online purchasing habits, based on their experience with the Web and the type of product in question.

## Behaviour varies according to sector

A user-friendly interface is a key factor in the decision to buy any kind of online travel product, regardless of the amount of Web user experience, leading experts to conclude that consumers want a simple reservation process. Competitive prices play a greater role in the purchase of less complex products, such as airline tickets, packages or car rental.

The quality and accuracy of the site's information was a deciding factor for travellers looking for activities, events, tours, attractions and accommodation. Company reputation was less important to those making "simple" transactions – such as renting a car – compared to those purchasing more complex products. Finally, customer loyalty programs constitute a greater draw for expert users and mainly affect purchases of airline tickets, car rental and attractions. 

### Source:

- Beldona, Srikanth, Alastair M. Morrison and Joseph O'Leary. "Online shopping motivations and pleasure travel products: a correspondence analysis." *Tourism Management*, No. 26, 2005.
- Ham, Sunny. "The Use of the Internet for Hospitality and Travel-related Activities." *e-Review of Tourism Research (eRTR)* [ferr.tamu.edu/j](http://ferr.tamu.edu/j), vol. 2, No. 6, 2004.
- Kim, Woo Gon. "Factors affecting online hotel reservation intention between online and non-online customers." *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, No. 23, 2004.

# Measuring the impact of festivals and events

Every year there seem to be more festivals and events taking place across Canada. As the number of festivals and events has grown across the country, so has the number of requests for financial support for these events received by governments.

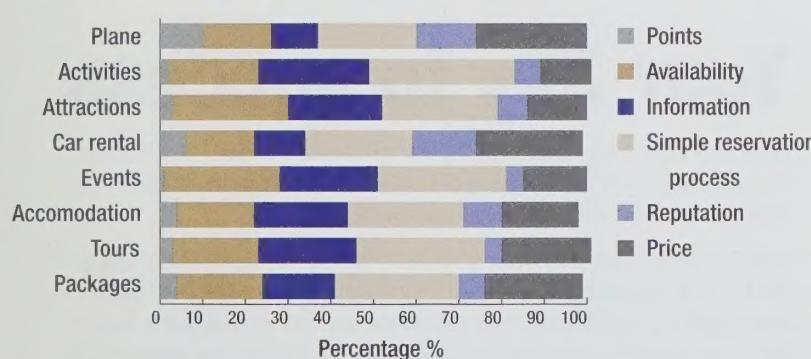
By the time summer 2006 arrives, tourism operators in this burgeoning sector will have a new set of guidelines at their disposal for measuring the economic impact of their events. Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) research is working on a set of guidelines to allow these operators to produce more realistic and useful figures estimating their tourism economic impact. The goal is to also produce standardized data and criteria for public servants to use when assessing requests for support for events.

"A lot of studies done on festivals and events are technically flawed and don't meet minimum research standards," says Scott Meis, executive director of research at the CTC. "It is necessary to provide guidelines for everyone, so everyone steps on the same scale."

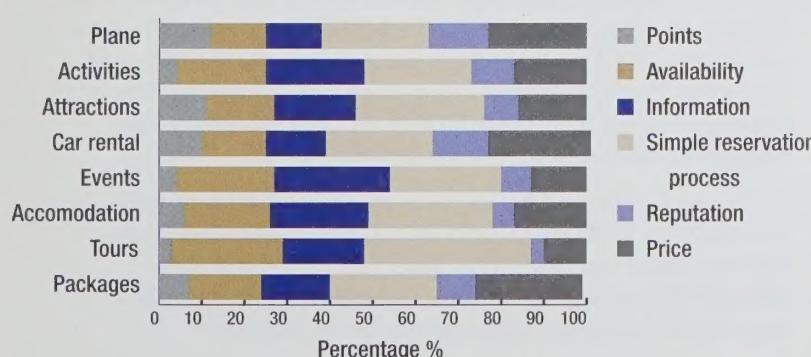
Tourism economic impact is an estimate of the change in sales, income and jobs due to the event, which is attributable to visitors coming from outside the community where the event is taking place. Guidelines will be provided for gated events and festivals, un-gated (or open access) events and festivals and on-site spending. The guidelines are appropriate for many types of events and festivals, but are not appropriate for all types, such as small-scale sports tournaments.

Richard Porges of Tourism British Columbia is acting as chair of the steering committee which is producing the guidelines. The first draft of the guidelines are set to be finalized this fall by the CTC research committee, and after a testing period are scheduled to be available by summer 2006. 

**Table 1**  
Reasons for Buying Online – Novice Web Users



**Table 2**  
Reasons for Buying Online – Expert Web Users



# Marketing & Sales



*continued from page 1*

However, we must never be in a situation where campaign measurement trumps customer service; happily, by fully embracing new internet technology and analytics, we can do both.

Microsites will be a part of that, but they will operate seamlessly within the global platform, ensuring customer service and easy access to the full range of Canadian tourism products while providing us with the customer information we need to promote our country effectively.

**TOURISM:** *How is this going to affect the way industry partners participate?*

**McKenzie:** We know there is a lot more we can do to service the customers, to make it easier for them to get to a booking, no matter what their interest. And this is where our industry as a whole is so important.

If you think about it, we are interested in creating interest about Canada, our partners are trying to make sales, and we kind of share all this common interest together. However, only a portion of our industry is investing in our various programs, and getting the direct benefit from them. We have all the other industry players who, while they may not see the value in any one particular program, still need to be attached to the "awareness of Canada" component of what we do, and it is that attachment we want to make a lot easier.

And this is where the web strategy becomes really relevant to small businesses, because at present they don't quite see the relevance of the CTC on the marketing side if they can't participate in our programming. But, if they can see leads being generated far more often through CTC marketing, they will understand our web efforts are working for all Canadian tourism businesses, at all levels and locations.

Further, the tourism industry across the country will benefit from our enhanced ability to track

customer responses as they click their way through our website. We will be able to gain insights into consumer preferences and thought processes, as well as what motivated them to find out more about exploring Canada and even (in a non-specific way) where these customers live. I want to stress that this is not about gathering mailing lists; it is about understanding what our customers are looking for and how to reach them more effectively.

**TOURISM:** *Looking at provincial, territorial, and city marketing organization websites, they range from very high quality and utility to, well, frankly, very low quality and utility to the consumer and the industry. Is the CTC's new web presence going to be crafted in partnership with these various organizations and their sites – despite the disparity – so that a business can be fully effective buying-in locally and letting the DMO or PMO participate with the CTC?*

**McKenzie:** In the past, and with our more traditional marketing activities, it has probably been easier for many small businesses to come to us through their provincial organizations, and that made a lot of sense. But when it comes to the web, which is a much more accessible vehicle, businesses should have the opportunity to partner directly with the CTC.

So, I would definitely encourage businesses to do both – get involved with their PMO or DMO and the CTC when it comes to web marketing. Who we will be targeting with our brand presence are the consumers who are looking to purchase an experience, then moving them to look for it in Canada. That consumer may not care in which province the experience will be delivered, and we will not be forcing that information onto them as they start looking to purchase the product.

For example, let us consider a person who is interested in experiencing the Canadian outdoors and perhaps also trying some

fly-fishing. That person will be able to come in and right away understand the opportunities for fly-fishing in Canada – no matter what market they are coming from and without knowledge of the geography of Canada. This person may not even know the name of any province, but they do know they are interested in fly-fishing.

Under our new strategy, the customer will understand – immediately – that opportunities for fly-fishing exist right across Canada. Then, they can consider other factors like geography and associated attractions and activities, and proceed to making a booking to purchase the experience they want.

What the CTC will be doing is providing customers with the ideas around the experience, making the *Keep Exploring* concept come alive on the web. Some customers will, of course, start their search on the web with a destination (province, etc.) in mind, and they can continue to do that. But the CTC site will not be organized in a hierarchical or geographic mode; it will focus on experiences first, no matter where the customer is from.

**TOURISM:** *How, then, will we be getting people to come to the CTC website in the first place?*

**McKenzie:** That is where the shift on the marketing side comes in, where we will be taking more of a guerrilla-style approach, being more "in the customer's face" in

their daily lives and encouraging them to think of Canada first as a destination where they can fulfill their vacation dreams. Then we want them to get on the web, find Canada, and immediately be presented with a range of experiences.

The use of a global platform – to which I referred earlier – will allow us to take advantage of a number of powerful knowledge acquisition software and analytical tools to measure, and assess in detail, the kind of response we are getting to our brand and product messaging. This gives us the power to fine-tune our messaging in a way that is non-obtrusive to the consumer, along with the ability to adjust our platform to make it even easier for consumers to find the Canadian experiences they want. This will provide a huge advantage for our Canadian tourism businesses, large and small.

It is important to note that this approach enables us to do global partnerships, which we were unable to do in the past but have started doing recently with Air Canada for example, using the same creative material in two markets (the UK and the US), and possibly soon in a third, Japan. The message is the same, the global web platform will make it work across all markets, and the strategy will make it work for all Canadian tourism products.

**TOURISM:** *Thank you!* 

## Your Key to success

Have you ever considered taking your business online? Frustrated by a language you don't speak, a widget you don't own, or time you don't have? Fear not, for help is on the way!

The Canadian Tourism Commission, in partnership with the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership, the Rainbow Country Tourism Association and FedNOR, has produced the *Tourism Keys: A handbook for tourism operations* to help guide and grow the presence of Canada's tourism SMEs on the world-wide web.

The guide will help SMEs make knowledgeable decisions on the use of web technology to improve their business. Topics range from the very basic – "the Essentials of a Good Website" – to the advanced – "Deep Web Traffic Analytics" – and everything in between. The information is laid-out in a simple fashion with critical information highlighted, and icons to ease navigation.

To accompany the guides a series of educational sessions were launched: the Northern Ontario Web-Enhancement Workshops. The first round has wrapped-up but a second phase will be offered in the fall with an emphasis on hands-on learning. Visit [www.tourismkeys.ca](http://www.tourismkeys.ca) to download the full document. 

# TOURISM Survey 2005

TOURISM Publications reach a large audience through a variety of products; this is your chance to speak your mind about the services we provide. Your comments are appreciated and will help us tailor the publications to better meet your needs.

We encourage those readers with internet access to complete the survey online at [www.canadatourism.com/survey](http://www.canadatourism.com/survey). Submitting the survey online reduces postage costs and better facilitates the compiling of survey results. We also welcome readers to submit their completed surveys via fax at (613) 946-2843, or simply fold the survey and drop it in the mail (postage paid).

Your comments are important to us. If you wish to communicate more fully with TOURISM Publications, please contact us at any time at [tourism@ctc-cct.ca](mailto:tourism@ctc-cct.ca) or by phone (613) 954-3919.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.



1. Please indicate to which publication you are referring to in this survey:

TOURISM magazine (printed, bi-monthly)  
 TOURISM Online (monthly)  
 Both publications

2. Are you familiar with our other publications?

TOURISM Daily news  
 TOURISM Online  
 TOURISM magazine

3. Are you a subscriber to TOURISM magazine?

Yes                     No  
 If yes, is your copy shared amongst colleagues?  
 Yes            How many? \_\_\_\_\_  No

4. What of the following would you like to see TOURISM Publications provide more coverage of?

Tourism business news  
 Tourism research information  
 Market analysis  
 Technology and tourism  
 CTC programs  
 Industry development  
 Human resources  
 Interviews with tourism leaders  
 Practical operational advice  
 Tourism products

5. Are there particular issues of interest to you that you would like TOURISM Publications to address?

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6. Please rank each of the following sections of TOURISM (magazine or online) in order of utility:

(1 = very useful, 5 = not at all useful)

News and Opinion \_\_\_\_\_  
 Marketing \_\_\_\_\_  
 Research \_\_\_\_\_  
 Industry Enhancement \_\_\_\_\_  
 Roundup (online only) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Generally speaking, are you satisfied with the content and quality of TOURISM Publications?

Yes                     No

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Other Comments:

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8. Do you feel that TOURISM Publications' coverage of industry issues external to the CTC is:

Adequate  
 Inadequate

9. Are you satisfied with a bi-monthly print publication (supplemented by the monthly TOURISM Online) or would you prefer a return to a printed monthly publication?

Yes, the current system works for me  
 No, I would prefer a monthly printed version  
 I read solely TOURISM Online

10. What is your source for information from within the CTC?

Industry events  
 TOURISM Publications  
 Industry association updates  
 CTC website (canadatourism.com)  
 Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

11. What is your primary involvement with the tourism industry?

Operator                     Employee

Small- or medium-sized business  
 Large tourism business  
 Travel trade  
 Destination / provincial marketing organization  
 Industry association  
 Convention / meeting planner  
 Student  
 Media  
 Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sector (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

12. What is your internet connection speed?

Dial-up  
 High-speed  
 No internet access

# The power of Canada as a destination

An interview with  
**Brian Richardson**

**Vice-president, brand marketing and communications with Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, Brian Richardson, is chair of the Asia Pacific Market Committee for the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC). His involvement with the CTC stretches back to well before the Crown corporation was formed – or even conceived of – when a number of Canada's tourism leaders recognized Canada needed to change how it marketed tourism. He was with the Asia Pacific when it first came together, as vice-chair, and has been chair since 1997. TOURISM spoke with him in August:**

**TOURISM:** You've been involved with this committee for about a decade, and that is a lot of commitment of time, effort and experience. Perhaps you could share with us your vision for Canada in this huge and diverse marketplace?

**Richardson:** Yes, indeed, the Asia Pacific region is a diverse marketplace, and the people in every culture there are different. But my perspective starts right here at home.

Having had the good fortune to travel all over the world, and so having the world as a point of reference, I realize that I never get tired of coming back to Canada. Without being at all disparaging of any other countries, I believe

## Travel a birthright?

**"Despite the slow economy we've (Americans) experienced over the last four years, Americans have continued to take vacations, with most of the population considering vacations as an American birthright. That's good news. Especially when according to the American Hotel and Lodging Association, high-end, luxury lodging has not been hurt as badly as mid- to low-priced lodging."**

**Anne Jordan of Inn Designs, in the B&B and Country Inn MarketPlace, Fall 2005**

we have so much to offer, and for me the challenge is getting that message out in a compelling and relevant way.

I think we have made tremendous progress with this as a destination. We know that when people come here, they enjoy our country and speak highly of their experiences

here; getting more of them to do just that is such a great opportunity for us. Sometimes I fear we are our own worst critics; we often under-estimate the power of Canada as a destination.

I am very excited about the new Canada Brand; this whole notion of Canada being a platform for exploration – coming to Canada to learn about one's self as well as about our country – is a very powerful idea. As we develop around that positioning, I think we have something that will be very compelling.

**TOURISM:** Do you think that brand message will ring with the same clarity across the Asia Pacific marketplace?

**Richardson:** It might be interpreted a little differently (in different countries). The Australians, for example, are very much into experiences, self-learning, and so it will be very compelling there. The Korean culture is very interested in a variety of experiences, travelling to see nature and landscapes as well as major cities, so I think it will work in that market. There is something about the notion of exploration that is transferable across different cultures and particularly the cultures of the Asia Pacific. How we bring it to life, though, could vary from market to market. It's all about making it tangible, but the fundamental positioning doesn't need to be changed.

**TOURISM:** Many of the projections we read (notably from the WTTC for example) are claiming that the

prospects for long-haul travel and therefore Canada?

**Richardson:** We feel very positive about this. There is no doubt there is a great deal of short-haul travel within Asia Pacific. If we look at the history of these countries, though, we find out that they start out travelling short-haul, they broaden their horizons and begin to travel long haul. It's a bit of a maturing process they go through, and in fact I think a lot of tourism growth will indeed be fueled by long-haul travel. I think the prospects for the next five to seven years are very positive for travel to Canada.

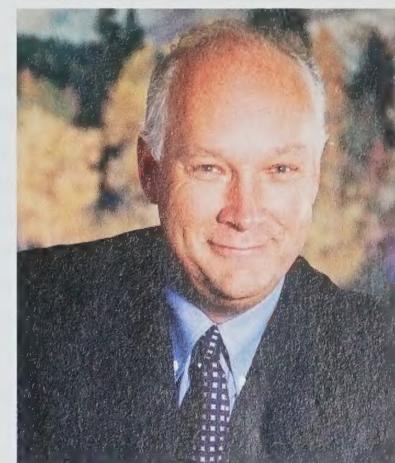
We are particularly excited about the Korean market, sustainable growth out of Australia, and the recovery of the Japanese market. And of course, China and India are looming up strongly. We're pretty confident about double-digit growth in some of these markets for Canada.

**TOURISM:** Many Canadian tourism operators (and probably some provincial and city marketing organizations) may still think of the Asia Pacific – with the exception of Australia – as a group travel market. But, now we are hearing FIT is on a strong growth curve. Can you enlighten us about this a bit?

**Richardson:** FIT is growing in almost every country we deal with. The internet is part of this change, but there is also a cultural shift that comes along with progressive familiarization with travel – and the destination itself. And, as the market matures along those lines, it is more inclined to travel independently.

**TOURISM:** Among new trends in the Asia Pacific market we hear that wellness tourism is really starting to grow. Before every entrepreneurial-minded hotelier rushes out and tries to market their swimming pool and hot tub as a spa, let's talk for a moment about just what is wellness tourism, in the context of the Asia Pacific market. How do we respond to this trend?

**Richardson:** I think it's more subtle than that. Wellness can be interpreted in different ways; there is the physical side of it, of course, but there is also the emotional and spiritual part. Wellness is a big issue in Korea, for example, but I



**Brian Richardson**

have seen a lot of information that says this is as much about learning as the physical side of wellness. In that marketplace, we probably need to show that a Canadian experience can provide – or be part of – a far more holistic experience than just a day in a spa. It's about well-being as much as well-ness.

**TOURISM:** E-marketing is a key focus of the CTC globally. In the Asia Pacific countries particularly, could this lead to the "de-democratization" of travel, to the point where we are only reaching the truly affluent traveller?

**Richardson:** As I look at world trends in tourism, I think travel is emerging in people's minds as a birthright, and I think this trend is almost universal. Research shows travel as very important particularly to people in the Asia Pacific and is truly a fundamental part of their lives. Having said this, it is true that not all travel experiences will be accessible to everyone, because of price.

I think the internet is moving even more people everywhere, to consider travel as a highly valued extension of their lives, and this bodes well for us in this industry. The people who live in Asia Pacific countries are very progressive in their use of the electronic media, so with a constituent who is migrating to the online space, it makes sense for the CTC to become more progressive in leveraging that online space to our advantage. We can reach a lot of people in a very cost-effective way, and there are a lot of people in the Asia Pacific market!

**TOURISM:** Thank you!  7

# The future of Sales

BY ANDREW CLARK

*With new faces, new energy, and a new brand, the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) moves forward with a more efficient organizational structure to meet the challenge of selling Canada in an ever more competitive market. Most notable among the changes at the CTC is the decision to split the sales and marketing position (last held by Jean B. Chrétien) into two separate but symbiotic entities. New to the CTC but not to the industry, Andrew Clark has been appointed as vice-president of sales and, along with Greg Klassen, vice-president of marketing, will be addressing the industry through this column on a regular basis.*

The selling of a destination is quite a different process from that of selling a commodity. One typically imagines the *sales* function as the process of providing a product to a client in exchange for compensation. Within the framework of the CTC, sales will become more about interaction and awareness than the actual transaction. The sales force at the CTC has typically focused on the overseas and international offices, leaving domestic activities to the marketing teams while working together towards a single goal. Because the CTC will be selling the virtues of a destination and not a physical product, the input and participation of those who actually provide the experience is vital.

In order to succeed we must unite the collective energy of destination marketing organizations (DMOs), the provinces, the international staff and the industry. We already have a great team in place at the CTC dedicated to showcasing the best Canada has to offer to clients and stakeholders worldwide. By providing leadership to the industry in-market we can better coordinate their efforts with the marketing team.

Last year the CTC identified Canada's most critical tourism markets, and in the coming years we will be working to maximize their potential while

developing new business and diversifying our market base. Working as a cohesive unit, we can eliminate the overlapping efforts that have occurred in the past, channeling our collective resources to save both time and money.

Opening the lines of communication to and from the international posts, and giving our global staff a real presence in the Commission's headquarters, will be an ongoing task. In fact, this communication is a vital component of the new strategy every step of the way. An increased presence – with a unified Canada message – at international trade shows, coupled with public relations activities, will make the most of every communications resource available to us and to our stakeholders. Today's customer is constantly bombarded with messages; to be effective, communications must be carried through channels that are relevant to the target market.

With Brand Canada, the CTC has been given a new set of tools and with them, new opportunities. Through strategic and targeted actions we will begin to generate a greater return on investment. It is the expectation of the Commission, and the Canadian tourism industry, to see this return and we must be accountable for our successes and pro-actively respond to challenges in the marketplace. Integrating public relations, marketing and media relations with effective customer relationship management will give Canada an advantage over our competitors. With the launch of E.ipiphany, the CTC's customer relationship management software, we now have the ability to communicate with our target market on a more personal (and effective) level. Shifting to a singular and global web presence allows us to interact with clients and customers the world over, all of whom will be looking to one source for Canadian travel information.

Every player in the industry – convention sales to car rentals, airline pilots to wait staff – have an impact on the final product, all have a stake in the success of the industry, and all must work together to provide a quality experience to the world. Destination marketers, the provinces and the industry will work in concert with the CTC in pursuit of a common goal. Our role in sales will be to ensure that the world knows what to expect from a vacation experience to Canada, and instill confidence in consumers that we can – and will – deliver on our promises. **T**

# Marketing the Asia/Pacific region

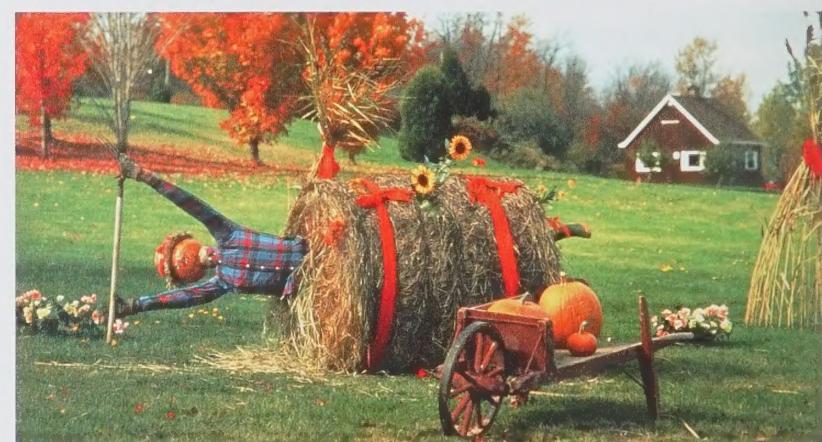
Market growth projections for tourism from the Asia Pacific region in the period 2006-2015 show that Southeast and Northeast Asia will climb 6.2% and 5.6% per year respectively. Tourism from India is expected to grow by 9.7% per year, followed by China at 8.5%.

The Korean market shows a high potential for Canada, with products suitable for the FIT segment in high demand. "Well being" and "wellness" have become the key words for Koreans since 2004, which are reflected in every corner of lifestyle including foods, travel, home and exercise.

Tour operators have developed wellness tours to provide more relaxed tour itineraries to Korean leisure travellers. Partnerships with three major portal websites (Yahoo Korea, Daum and Naver) are conducting joint promotions targeting their 500,000-600,000 members, and the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) is working closely with internet-based tour operators such as Nextour (which recently merged with Travelocity, Tourexpress and Webtour) to target their loyal online travel clients seeking FIT-friendly travel products.

Down under, statistics show 26% (5.5 million) Australians use the internet and are inclined to use that medium to find information about their holiday, although they are not yet booking long-haul travel online. The CTC is transferring all its publications to electronic format to encourage consumers to use this medium.

The demand for experience-based tourism is growing in Australia, and the CTC is capitalizing on this growth with the launch of its new *Canada Experiences Guide*. Focusing on the FIT and Fly/Drive traveller, the new guide is designed to offer travellers a taste of the incredible experiences available across Canada, encouraging first-time and repeat visitors to "explore more" and to have a comprehensive understanding of the wealth of attractions and activities that are on offer in Canada. Niche markets



in Australia include food and wine tours, wildlife viewing, adventure/trekking and MC&IT.

In 2004, Canada saw visitor numbers from Japan rebound to pre-SARS levels. With the economy in Japan continuing to improve, that country – the second largest economy in the world – remains an important market for Canada. Air capacity and air access are significant obstacles to growth in that market where there has been no growth over the medium term.

Also, when Canada competes against rival destinations we find ourselves being outspent. The strategy of the CTC office in Japan is focused on three main areas: reinforcing and growing our major products and promoting year round quality experiences; extending relationships and promotions across a variety of air carriers; and working as one team to ensure all of Canada's resources are focused on one goal: competing successfully in the market for the Japanese long haul traveller. **T**

# Industry Enhancement

## It's all downhill... but things are looking up

As discussed in previous issues of *TOURISM Online*, the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) has undertaken a new strategy to reach the US leisure traveller. In addition to three key US cities, the 2005/06 strategy will focus on a select group of niche markets/products: gay and lesbian travellers, high-end fishing lodges and now, skiers.

There is healthy competition for Canada from the US ski segment. A 2003 Travel Activities and Motivation Survey (TAMS) reports skiers display an almost universal tendency to travel domestically for leisure trips (95%) yet are also apt to travel to Mexico or the Caribbean (28%) or Europe (27%) over other countries (18%). These rates of overseas travel are significantly higher than those of the typical US leisure visitor to Canada.

The target demographic is composed of more men (59%) than women (41%) and is concentrated towards the younger end of the age spectrum; almost two-thirds are between 18 and 44 years, with a higher proportion of those falling into the 18 to 34 year age group (36%) than in the older age group (28%). Most US skiers live in adult-only households – those with no members under the age of eighteen (65%).

Skiers are more affluent than the "typical" American leisure traveller to Canada. The average household income of a "skier" is \$74,900 (US\$) compared to \$65,200 (US\$) for the typical visitor. This disparity should be expected as there is a clear correlation between higher levels of formal education and higher income: 43% of these skiers have a university degree and a further 41% have some other form of post-secondary education.

Both NY and California have proven to be particularly receptive to CTC advertising. Southern Florida, Texas and Colorado remain priorities as areas of high skier density along with the eastern seaboard and Washington State. One region in particular – the Pacific Northwest – is "appreciably over-represented" within the ski-market. This area accounts

for 15% of all American adults who have travelled to Canada in the past couple of years, but represents 27% of the alpine ski market to Canada. Washington State residents comprise more than 10% of all ski tourists to Canada, but only 2% of all Canada-bound US travellers.

An Ipsos-Reid study was commissioned by a consortium of BC ski resorts to compare the spending habits, awareness and key information portals of their customers in each of these regions. Research has shown that paid accommodation still remains the most common lodging used by skiers (41%) while timeshares accounted for 6% and staying with friends of family, 13% (the remainder questioned did not take an overnight trip during the last five years). A recommendation by family or friends was reported as the most important planning source (63%).

Skiers are big spenders. Twenty-seven percent of respondents spent between \$500 and \$999 in their last visit to a ski resort; the second most common spending category was a tie between the \$1000 - \$1999 category and the \$2000+ category, both of which fell at 21%. The average spend (by party) was \$1520 per trip on gas, food, entertainment, lodging and lift tickets, roughly \$440 per day.

See *TOURISM Online* (September) for more on the ski market. **7**

### A 2005 poll of *Ski* and *Skiing* magazine subscribers revealed the following:

- Over 50% book ski vacations more than a month in advance.
- The average ski vacation lasts 4.3 nights and includes 3.5 people.
- Skiers averaged 12.1 ski days in 2004; snowboarders average 7.3 days.
- Awareness of Canada as a ski vacation destination was 32%, behind Colorado and Utah.
- Within Canada, awareness was highest for British Columbia (16%), Alberta (3%) and Quebec (2%).

## The mighty microsite

*"A separately promoted part of a larger website, a microsite is designed to meet separate objectives and has a separate web address (or URL) as its home page. Typically, a microsite resides on the same web server and reflects the branding and overall visual design of the larger site with which it is associated."*

*– As defined by [Whatis.com](http://Whatis.com)*

Okay, but how does this apply to me? Microsites are becoming increasingly common in one's everyday web experience, and they play a critical role in the Canadian Tourism Commission's current web strategy. If your business intends to have an online presence, there is a very real possibility that a microsite will be put to work for you at some point.

Because microsites work with a separate web address from the home site, it makes the analysis

and measurement of product interest and campaign results a reasonable challenge to tackle. Web addresses, or URLs, can be changed to provide a unique identifier and a site name that will be recognized and remembered by the consumer.

For example, your hotel is offering a fall-colours spa package for October 2005. A microsite can be created with the name ColoursInComfort.ca. It is easy to remember for the consumer, easy to track and can either redirect users to the main webpage or simply provide a site dedicated to a specific offering. Your regular service provider should be able to host the site – just register the domain name and create the site content.

The CTC has made use of microsites in the past and continues to do so with its US campaigns. Each of these particular campaigns has a related microsite that is the focus of the call-to-action. Instead of an unwieldy website address, like

[www.travelcanada.ca/microsite/us\\_comesee/home.do](http://www.travelcanada.ca/microsite/us_comesee/home.do), the CTC created ComeSeeCanada.com that provides a user-friendly URL. Visitors to the above address are immediately redirected to a TravelCanada.ca microsite with offers from partners and campaign-specific information.

Microsites allow for immediate and ongoing tracking of your customer base and the effectiveness of your advertising. Data can be collected and broken down to quickly determine what is working, and what isn't. Using *ComeSeeCanada.com* (launched February 1, 2005) as an example:

- 311,365 visitors to the site (235,000 through the home page)
- Distribution of visitors: Africa (871), Asia (7453), Australia (1088) and Europe (9914). The rest are from within North America, which can be further broken down to the city level.
- Search engines generated 76,414 visitors: Google (20,569), Yahoo, MSN and AOL rank as the top four.

Common search words also vary a great deal: "map of Canada" (3308), "Canada" (1517) or "Canada tourism" (830), down to the obscure; "bike trails" (44), "Caribana" (62) or "horseback riding", (42).

Using this information, you can tailor your marketing efforts. If a large percentage of your online visitors reached you through a search for horseback riding, perhaps that is a product that should feature more prominently on your main site. Getting lots of "hits" from web-surfers in Toronto? Your latest ad in the local paper must have had an impact.

Microsites offer a world of flexibility that a traditional homepage-style site cannot match. Selling yourself and your product in Canada's tourism industry requires an operator to constantly evolve and adjust to the ever-changing seasons, markets and competitive climate. Consider the possibility of adding a microsite for your next campaign; after all – nothing ventured, nothing gained! **7**

# US market under the microscope

Despite a full recovery and even strong growth in other international markets, US leisure travel to Canada continues to underperform, failing to rebound following the shocks of BSE, SARS and 9/11. As disappointing and bewildering as this may be, even more puzzling are the reasons for the continued decline. Falling exchange rates, border issues, Canada's position on the Iraq conflicts, security concerns, gas prices – all may be seen as logical hypotheses, but there is no simple answer.

The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) Board of Directors views this to be an urgent matter and has launched a task force to assess the current situation and come up with an action plan to revitalize this struggling market. The final report is slated to be released by the end of December 2005 and preliminary results are expected to be presented at the Tourism Industry Association of Canada Leadership Summit in late October.

The CTC Board of Directors has drawn together an internal working group composed of Rod Seiling, president, Greater Toronto Hotel Association;

Bill Allen, deputy minister, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership; and Kelliann Dean, deputy minister, Nova Scotia Tourism to look into the situation. In addition, a task force of tourism leaders (to be co-chaired by CTC president and CEO Michele McKenzie and Marc Rosenberg, vice-president, sales and product distribution for Air Canada, and chair of the CTC's US Leisure Committee) has been struck to provide an industry perspective. Objectives include identifying the underlying causes of the weakness in the US market as well as current attitudes, motivations and behaviour of the US domestic and outbound traveller.

The CTC is conducting a review of existing research to determine what gaps need to be filled to provide an accurate picture. The CTC will look to its Canadian partners and stakeholders for their input on past experiences with the market, current and historical market investment, and any research they may have carried out. New research will be undertaken as necessary to ensure the tourism industry has access to the clearest possible picture of the realities impacting Canada's potential success in the US market. **7**

## Borders complicate a hunting vacation

Hunting may be a lucrative business for a select group of Canadian operators but their primary source of business lies just south of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. Border crossings, live ammunition and dead animals are not likely to make good bedfellows; as a result, guides and outfitters are often on the receiving end of customers who may have spent a few frustrating hours at the international border crossings.

Oddly enough, bringing a firearm across the border is a simple task. Provided that you are licensed to own and operate the gun, and have the appropriate paperwork filled out, the process should go smoothly.

"Right now (after the gun registry legislation) it has been problem free. Our customers commonly bring their guns across the border," reports one bear-hunting outfitter. "Passports and DUI (impaired driving) convictions and stuff like that are more of a problem really." Most outfitting associations or hunting lodges offer the *Non-Resident Firearms Declaration* paperwork for download in advance. The forms allow non-residents to operate their guns for a period of up to 60 days. The permits must also be produced at the request of a police or conservation officer.

There are regulations in place to determine what, when, and how animals can be transported across provincial and international borders. It is wise to keep up-to-date information on these regulations and ensure your clients are aware of the steps that must be followed to transport their trophies. In some cases the forms must be obtained from the US Customs Service prior to entering Canada. Northwest Territories Tourism's *2002 Exit Survey (Hunters)* shows a significant number of hunters were displeased with their airlines over the preparation, handling and transport of their trophies on the return trip. Spoiled meat, damaged antlers and "inconsistent airlines fees" were noted.

Even once the appropriate paperwork has been completed, the border crossing itself still must take place. As is the case with most of the US leisure market, the general public needs to be educated on what is an appropriate form of identification; a driver's license will not be sufficient.

"It's an ongoing challenge for us to educate our customers on what they'll require. Time and time again we get complaints from clients on border issues," says Dave Reynolds of the Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters association. "However, a little bit of customer service at these crossings would go a long way to alleviating the problem." Border guards are the first people travellers from the US encounter. As you only get one chance to make a first impression, guides and outfitters should make every effort to ensure this process is as pain-free as possible for their clients.

It may surprise you but border problems – specifically past criminal convictions that could prohibit one's entry to Canada – are more common among the angling community. In order to legally purchase or register a firearm, you must first go through a criminal background check. This in turn results in fewer surprises at the border.

"Every so often people complain to me about having to register their guns; they don't think the government should get involved. Most people are fine with it though." **7**

### Average Trip Spending: Hunters

- Tobacco and alcohol - \$22
- Hunting supplies - \$32
- Extra baggage charges - \$90
- Meals - \$111
- Additional trips - \$194
- Souvenirs - \$237
- Accommodation - \$277
- Guide tips - \$520
- Airfare - \$1,489
- Taxidermy charges - \$1,685
- Hunting package cost - \$8,923

Total Estimated Trip Spending: \$15,000

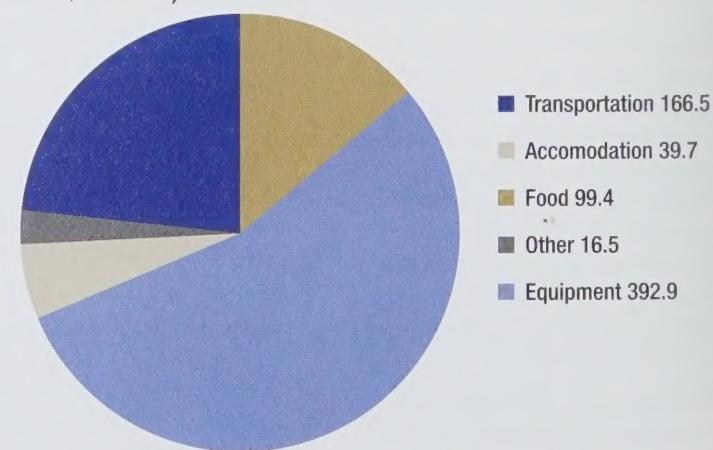
Source: 2001 Hunter Survey Report: General Report on Hunters to the Northwest Territories, *Government of Northwest Territories*

Average per party spending of a general touring visitor travelling by air is \$4,720.

Source: 2002 Visitors Exit Survey: Report on Hunters, *Government of Northwest Territories*

### Expenditures on Hunting in Canada (1996)

Source: Environment Canada  
(expressed in \$ millions)



# Staying ahead of cyber-squatters

Among the most common of shady business practices making an impact on the tourism industry is domain-name "spoofing" or hijacking. There have been many cases across Canada – and across the world – in which a business owner has failed to register all the appropriate (or related) domain names for the business' website. As a result, web-wizards of ill repute will take ownership of a website, sometimes only relinquishing the site registration for monetary gain, or perhaps using it to sell products of their own while driving traffic away from the legitimate business.

For example, let's say that a fictional business, "Big Wave Rafting", decided to create a website for itself, registering only [www.bigwaverrafting.ca](http://www.bigwaverrafting.ca). That leaves [bigwaverrafting.com](http://bigwaverrafting.com), [big-wave-rafting.ca](http://big-wave-rafting.ca) and a host of other possible domain-names open for occupation by "site-squatters". It is a legal practice, provided the new site does not attempt to misrepresent itself as the original.

The benefits are obvious. Perhaps the owners of the "fake" site may also happen to sell rafting trips in a similar area, effectively hijacking legitimate customers from Big Wave Rafting. This practice is common in every tourism sector – spas, airlines, hotels – and is beyond the reach of even the federal government. A very blatant example involves [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov) (the official US government site) and [www.whitehouse.com](http://www.whitehouse.com) (which is anything but).

There are options available to those businesses that have yet to encounter this dilemma. It is difficult to own every possible combination of domain names – and each site you register costs money – so take some time to consider and register the most similar site name possibilities. Speak with your site registrar or service provider about what security measures you can take to prevent this type of hijacking.

Once a site has been "spoofed", regaining ownership of the domain name can be a costly venture, usually requiring the squatter to sell you the rights to the name. (Take a quick look on [Ebay.com](http://Ebay.com) to see a list of domain name squatters who have sites names to sell.) The key to successfully battling most domain disputes is proving 'bad faith' – that the domain has been registered by someone who has no

legitimate right to the domain and is trying to profit from your name. There are organizations which can re-assign domain names through legal proceedings but before these measures are pursued (at great cost) operators can run a "WHOIS" (who is) search to reveal the site owners and occasionally how to contact them. There are a number of websites offering WHOIS searches quickly and at no cost. Contact the owner of the name in question and perhaps a resolution can be found.

The internet developed (and continues to develop) at such an astounding rate that many of the legal and technical kinks have yet to be worked out. In an effort to crackdown on the practice of site squatting, ICANN, (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) established the Uniform Dispute Resolution Policy, which has set the bar with regard to ownership disputes. It has also authorized a select group of organizations around the world to offer dispute-resolution services, with the intention being that – through the use of one of these authorized mediators – time and money spent on settling disagreements can be kept to a minimum.

As discussed in previous issues of *TOURISM*, there is a solution on the horizon. A new top-level domain – .travel – has been created specifically for travel and tourism operations by Tralliance Corporation. Registration for .travel addresses require that an applicant offer a legitimate tourism product and thus prevents "squatting" on another business' name.

"It is a long-term project, but I do hope that ultimately every legitimate travel and tourism business will operate with a .travel listing," explains Ron Andruff, Tralliance CEO. "Whether you are large or small becomes completely irrelevant; what you are offering to the trade or the consumer becomes the focus. The Hotel Association of Canada has shown a great deal of enthusiasm in getting their members signed up for this and I will be addressing TIAC (Tourism Industry Association of Canada) at their next annual conference."

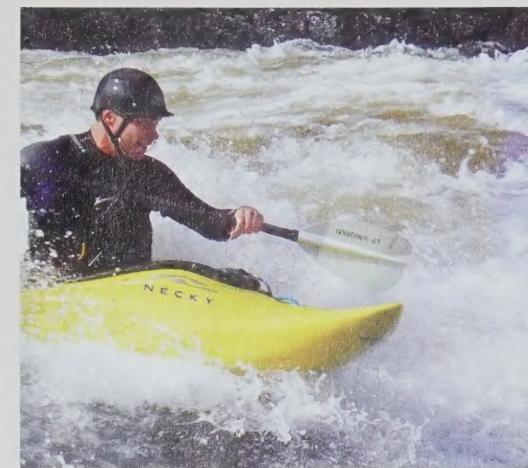
Registration with Tralliance will begin "on or around September 1". Expect .travel websites to begin appearing within the next year. **7**

# ... only in the Online!

The summer is a busy period for everyone in Canada's tourism industry; thankfully each issue of *TOURISM* Online is archived on the web. In case you missed them, you may want to peruse the following articles from the past few months:

- *Something for Nothing* sheds some light on the common scams and shady practices in the tourism industry. Worthwhile reading for any business owner. (September)
- *At Issue*, a monthly column penned by Randy Williams, president and CEO of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, examines the value of investing in your employees. (August)
- *Risk management and insurance: a two-way street* takes a closer look at the link between risk management and the insurance industry. This is a must-read for any business in the adventure tourism sector. (June)
- *Google likes it fresh* gives easy-to-understand advice on getting your website to the top of any search-engine's "hit list" – just one of the monthly tips from Navigata Communications Ltd. (June)

*TOURISM* Online can be found on [www.canadatourism.com](http://www.canadatourism.com). To access the *Past Issues* look for the link on the right side of the cover page. **7**



**Experiencing Canada!** When not engrossed in the production of *TOURISM* Online, contributing editor Philip Kompass can usually be found on the wild waters of the Ottawa River near Beachburg, Ontario.

## Untangle the Web

### You scratch mine, and I'll scratch yours

Customers often ask me where I think they should advertise, and I respond that, while there are numerous paid advertising channels available, one should not overlook the free advertising opportunities right in front of one's nose. One particularly useful one is commonly overlooked: promote your business on other 'non-competing' tourism websites in your geographical area.

If you haven't done so already, create a section on your website which lists tourism information and businesses that can assist your website visitors with their travel planning. For example, if you offer wine tours, provide information about hotels and transportation. In exchange for promoting a business on your site, contact each business and ask for the favour to be reciprocated. Not only will this give you free advertising in a highly targeted space but you will also receive more links to your website.

And, as you may or may not know, the more 'relevant' links you have pointing to your website, the better chance it has at appearing higher on the search engines. A link is considered a 'relevant link' when it appears on a website with a similar theme.

Jeffrey Johnston is a sales and marketing specialist with Travel.bc.ca, a division of Navigata Communications Ltd. Navigata's Web team specializes in website development for the travel sector. **7**



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"They have been a driving force for this, and for programs that can make small enterprises more ready to benefit from this international web-based marketing we are preparing for."

But the question remains, are Canada's SMEs ready for this new online approach? Their answer: a resounding "Yes".

The CTC spent the past winter working with, and listening to, the needs of SMEs across the country. The results of their findings are summarized in a February 2005 report, *Best Practices in Working with Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in the Tourism Industry*, which illustrates that not only are SMEs ready to take their businesses online, many of them are already there.

"Increasingly, the marketing programs that work best for SMEs are the e-marketing tools – particularly their own websites and linkages to the websites of PMOs, DMOs and other marketing partners," details the report. Online campaigns allow small businesses to reach more markets, anywhere in the world, at a much lower cost than many other traditional marketing methods. As 91% of SMEs have annual revenues of less than \$10 million (51% have less than \$1 million), marketing budgets are often curbed in favour of more pressing operational issues. Online campaigns can be tailored to the market and the budget of any SME. In terms of participation, SMEs were most actively involved with e-coupon offers and listings on the websites of their destination and provincial marketing organizations.

When surveyed, SMEs identified a number of challenges to further growth in online activities. Not surprisingly, cost was primary among them. Although marketing and promotion on the web are relatively inexpensive, the initial set-up (equipment, education, access and site creation) can be a major hurdle, although one well worth tackling. Some – most likely hoteliers – balked at the effort of creating and main-

taining an e-reservation system. Even once set-up, the rapid pace of change in the tech sector has operators concerned with either being left behind or faced with the cost of constant upgrades.

Training opportunities would be appreciated but running a small business is a demanding job, requiring constant attention in order to keep even a slim profit margin. These pressures mean owners have precious little time for training, especially during the hectic busy season.

However, there are excellent resources available once the decision has been made to get onto the learning curve. Throughout Canada there are affordable, government-sponsored courses, workshops and seminars designed to help businesses get computer savvy and improve their e-business skills. However not all small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMEs) are aware of the courses or know how convenient they are.

The CTC is putting together a guide for operators of SMEs who want to avail themselves of these training opportunities. The guide will describe courses and include toll-free phone numbers and websites so that businesses can contact the programs directly. There are courses suitable for people of all abilities, from absolute beginners to experienced users interested in subjects such as search engine optimization and customer relations' management. The guide will be available this fall.

Across the board – whether seeking customers from across the street or across the world – Canadian SMEs are aware of the opportunities open to them by taking their businesses online. In the demand economy of the coming years, customers must be able to access the information they need, when they need it; technology has made this a possibility for the smallest of businesses in the most remote corners of Canada. As the CTC moves more of its content online, small businesses in the industry are preparing to be right beside it every step of the way. **7**

## People

### New faces at the CTC

The Honourable David L. Emerson, the federal minister responsible for the Canadian Tourism Commission, has appointed Brian Alexander to the CTC Board of Directors. Since 2003, Alexander has served as the deputy minister of Tourism and Parks for the Government of New Brunswick.

Maggie Davison has been appointed as the new managing director of the CTC office in the UK. Raised in the UK, Davison has an extensive background in travel management, having most recently held the post of managing director with First Choice Canada. She is extremely familiar with the UK market, with experience in a wide variety of managerial positions and ultimately, ownership of a retail agency. **7**

## Buchanan receives industry acclaim

Tourism Vancouver has presented the Harold J. Merilees Memorial Award to the Canadian Tourism Commission's (CTC) founding chairman Judd Buchanan, recognizing him as an individual who "has made an outstanding contribution to the well being and awareness of tourism for Greater Vancouver". While Buchanan headed the Crown corporation, he maintained an office at Tourism Vancouver, where he was well-liked and highly respected; the award also recognizes Buchanan's significant contribution to the effort to gain Approved Destination Status from China.

Buchanan was further honoured in early September by being named the first recipient of the William H. Baxter Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was established by the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism in recognition of the late W.H. Baxter's contributions to the tourism industry in Canada through the travel business publishing house he founded.

In picking Buchanan for the award, the selection panel determined that his "efforts to promote the excellence and competitiveness of the Canadian tourism product were exemplary." **7**

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